

BBA President Urges Walk to Hill Participation

Emphasizing the importance of access to justice for all, BBA President Kathy Weinman, a partner at Dwyer & Collora, LLP, urges every lawyer and law firm in Massachusetts to participate in the January 22 “Walk to the Hill” lobbying day at the State House.

Help Preserve Legal Aid for the Poor

Thursday, January 22, 2009
Great Hall 11:00-12:00, Legislative Visits 12:00-1:00
State House, Boston

The Boston Bar Association, the Massachusetts Bar Association, and the Equal Justice Coalition, along with a number of county and specialty bars, will sponsor the **10th annual Walk to the Hill for Civil Legal Aid on Thursday, January 22 at the State House**. Private attorneys and bar leaders from across Massachusetts will ask their legislators to retain funding for legal aid to begin to address the longstanding shortage of legal aid in civil cases. Last year’s Walk drew over 600 attorneys from 40 sponsor firms, with 13 managing partners participating.

Civil legal aid programs provide advice and assistance to low-income people in matters such as child support and custody, domestic violence, housing, employment and health care. Currently, because of the drastic shortage of resources, local programs are forced to turn away a majority of eligible callers. With few alternatives, those turned away often appear in court unrepresented. Not only are they at a disadvantage in court, but unrepresented litigants slow the courts for all users.

At the State House, registration and firm photographs will take place from 11:00 to 11:30 and the program will begin promptly at 11:30. At 12:00 noon, Walk to the Hill participants will visit their own legislators to ask them to maintain civil legal services funding at \$11 million to help address the overwhelming unmet need for services. The advocacy packet you will receive when you register will contain everything you need for your legislative visits. In addition, lunch will be provided.

The county and specialty bars co-sponsoring this year’s Walk to the Hill, include: Asian-American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts; Bar Association of Norfolk County; Berkshire Bar Association; Bristol County Bar Association; Essex County Bar Association; Franklin County Bar Association; Gay and Lesbian Bar Association of Massachusetts; Greater Lowell Bar Association; Hampden County Bar Association; Hampshire County Bar Association; Hellenic Bar Association; Lawrence Bar Association; Massachusetts Academy of Trial Attorneys; Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association; Massachusetts Black Women Attorneys; National Lawyers Guild, Massachusetts Chapter; Plymouth County Bar Association; Real Estate Bar Association; South Middlesex Bar Association; Women’s Bar Association; Worcester County Bar Association.

For further information, please contact the BBA at 617-778-1942.